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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

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Letter dated 18 April 1991 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to draw your most urgent attention to the expansion and intensification of Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, by Israel, the occupying Power, which is thus in violation of its international obligations and obstructing the peace process in the region.

The New York Times reported on 17 April 1991 that a new Jewish settlement (Revava) had been opened on 16 April in the West Bank. It also reported that the Israeli Housing Minister has plans to build 13,000 housing units in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and to accelerate the expansion of Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem.

On 5 April 1991, the Washington Post reported that the Israeli Government had just supplied several settlements with 1,200 trailer homes to be used by newly-arrived Soviet Jews. It also reported that these housing units were part of a Government plan to increase the Jewish population in the occupied Palestinian territories by 50 per cent.

The daily paper Hadashot reported on 26 March 1991 that, according to the Peace Now movement of Israel, the Israeli housing budget for 1990-1991 in the occupied Palestinian territories had exceeded $550 million, which is considerably more than in past years. According to the same newspaper, some 200,000 settlers are currently living in 200 settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

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The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People strongly deplores this intensification of the settlements policy and practice pursued by Israel, the occupying Power, in violation of its obligations under article 49 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and of Security Council resolutions 446 (1979), 452 (1979) and 465 (1980). Furthermore, these actions are hindering efforts to reach a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Committee requests that Israel cease its settlement activities immediately and accept the de jure applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and that it abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Convention and of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Committee appeals urgently to you and to all the parties concerned, in particular the High Contracting Parties to the fourth Geneva Convention, to take all necessary measures to achieve these essential objectives.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 23, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Absa Claude DIALLO
Chairman
Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People